

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 19 are now pending in the application. Minor amendments have been made to the claims to comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112. The amendments to the claims contained herein are of equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, are not a narrowing amendment. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection(s) in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REMARKS REGARDING THE RESPONSE TO ARGUMENTS

The Office Action asserts that Small discloses that the controller controls the switch circuit to prevent all of the output terminals operating at the same time (see column 5, lines 20 to 64).

However, Figure 2B shows the on/off switch assembly 67 as a double pole, single throw switch including on/off switches 69 and 71. Thus, switches 69 and 71 close simultaneously thereby allowing current to flow to output terminals 51A and 53A (switch 69) and 51B and 53B (switch 71) simultaneously. Thus, the selection of the ports is restricted to simultaneous selection. In sharp contrast, the claimed invention recites restriction from simultaneous selection (e.g., "restricted from selecting" as claimed in claim 1).

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 to 3, 7 to 9, and 14 to 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Small (U.S. Pat. No. 6,459,175). Please note that in previous correspondence Small has been identified as U.S. Patent No. 6,459,175. Because the column, line, and figure references appear to match U.S. Patent No. 6,459,175

(issued to Small), the Applicant believes the rejection is over the '675 patent. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claim 1, the Office Action asserts that Small describes a port switch restricted from selecting all of said output ports simultaneously. However, Small describes all of the relays (ports) being switched on simultaneously (see column 12, lines 7 to 11). In contrast, the present invention recites the port switch being restricted from selecting all of said output ports simultaneously, as set forth in claim 1. Small further does not appear to teach or suggest restricting selection of all of the output ports simultaneously.

Thus, Small fails to describe each and every recitation of claim 1 as is required for an anticipation rejection. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) rejection of claim 1 and the claims dependent thereon, claims 2 and 3, be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 2, the Office Action further asserts that Small describes a port switch configured to restrict selection of any combination of said output ports having over-current protection circuits with maximum current ratings totaling more than a pre-selected maximum current. The Office Action references column 4 lines 47 to 55 wherein Small discusses the ratings of the ports 51 and 53 and the circuit breakers 47. However, the referenced lines fail to describe the configuration of a port switch.

Moreover, because Small describes all of the ports being switched on simultaneously, as set forth above, Small fails to describe a restriction on the selection of the output ports because of the port switch configuration. Since claim 2 recites the port switch being configured to restrict the selection of output ports, Small fails to disclose each and every recitation of claim 2. Accordingly, the Applicant

respectfully requests that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) rejection of claim 2 and the claims dependent thereon, claims 3 and 4, be withdrawn.

For reasons similar to the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully requests that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) rejection of claim 7 and the claims dependent thereon, claims 8 and 9 be withdrawn.

Likewise, regarding claim 14, the Applicant respectfully requests that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) rejection of claim 14 and the claim dependent thereon, claim 15, be withdrawn for reasons similar to those set forth above.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5, 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Small in view of Potega (U.S. patent No. 6,459,175). Claims 6, 12, 13, 16, 17 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Small. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As set forth above, Small fails to describe each and every recitation of the independent claims 1, 7, and 14. Moreover, because Small teaches all of the ports being switched on simultaneously, as set forth above, Small teaches away from a restriction on the selection of output ports as recited in the independent claims.

Because Small teaches away from the claimed invention, it is improper to use Small either alone, or in combination with Potega, to reject claims dependent on independent claims 1, 7, or 14. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 5 to 6, 11 to 13, and 16 to 17 be withdrawn.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Office Action states that claims 18 and 19 have been allowed. The Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of claims 18 and 19.

Additionally, the Office Action states that claims 4 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Since the claims from which claims 4 and 10 depend, claims 1 and 7, are believed to be in condition for allowance, the Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to claims 4 and 10 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (314) 726-7500.

Respectfully submitted,

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HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

By: 
Robert L. Villhard, 53,725

RLV/dmkd